

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF INDIA

dirty or squalid about his conceptions. No one has done more than he to call India to cleanliness and self-respect. He has done scavenging work with his own hands and calls the *bourgeois* to like respect for menial tasks. It is a testimony to his influence that at Haripura the all-important sanitary work and scavenging was done by educated Gujarati youths and very admirable it was too. (And one must remember that this work has always been relegated to the Harijan, who were condemned to untouchability because of it.) My first talk with Gandhi was about the best methods of disposing of night-soil! Gandhi's extremism is aimed at breaking down the gulf between the educated middle class and the villager and what he believes to be a false standard of living. The time must come when a mean is struck between his asceticism and the new wine of Socialism, but the Socialists can and must learn a good deal from his discipline even if they feel that he is a new Canute trying to stem the waves of progress.

There may be much to be said for an interim policy of simple crafts, but it is worth recalling that the R.A.C. said that "the possibilities of improving the condition of the rural population by the establishment of rural industries are extremely limited⁵⁵ and this judgment would be upheld by many experts. First things must come first, and, while there may be a great future for decentralised factories, the first need is to ensure for the peasant security of tenure, and the political freedom which alone can make it possible to have a concerted plan for economic development for the whole country. Careful planning is necessary; State farms are a possibility in certain parts; and, above all, the speedy liquidation of illiteracy. The country is enormously wealthy in natural resources. The grinding poverty of the masses is not only a crime; it is unnecessary. Russia is beginning to organise her productive forces and feed and clothe and